



STATE OF MICHIGAN



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MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH
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DIRECTOR

THE "COOL CITY PILOT" PROGRAM!
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

4/2004

WHAT IS THE MICHIGAN COOL CITY PILOT PROGRAM? The Governor's Cool City Initiative is about capitalizing upon inherent strengths of Michigan's cities to be attractive places to live for an increasingly diverse group of residents. The Michigan Cool City Pilot Program creates a Toolbox that represents an unprecedented collaboration of state agencies, and offering of state agency resources, that can be used to move our state toward the goal of creating Cool Cities that simultaneously retain and attract workers and jobs. This Toolbox, under the Governor's initiative, is an effort to promote holistic approaches and ongoing investment in neighborhoods that have, or are moving to create, a mix of residential and commercial uses, mixed income housing, and a pedestrian-friendly environment. This is as important in downtown and near downtown areas as it is in more traditional residential neighborhoods.

WHAT IS AVAILABLE? The Toolbox constitutes key state agency resources, be it grant funds, loans, tax credits, or services, which could potentially serve to help create vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods. When combined with private and local public investment, along with good old-fashioned ingenuity and creativity, these dynamic forces can help transform our neighborhoods. All proposals received which meet the above objectives will be directed toward the appropriate resources in the Toolbox which are being aligned to better facilitate these projects. The newest of these resources is the Cool City Catalyst Grant, that offers up to \$100,000 for a holistic project that appears to warrant priority consideration. If yours is one of approximately twelve projects selected for a Cool City Catalyst Grant, the project will enjoy this priority designation when applying for any state resources within whose eligibility and program guidelines the project components fit. Please note, however, that the tools that constitute the Toolbox are available for the many creative projects that may fit within these state programs targeted at creating Cool Cities, whether these projects receive Pilot Program designation or not.

WHAT CAN WE APPLY FOR? We want creative projects to be able to access the range of services and resources available. And, we expect that there is the potential for MANY great projects that will exhibit the heft of local partners and private resources, and be within neighborhoods worthy of investment. This package provides a novel grouping of key resources currently available to move us collectively toward our goal of creating vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods. An application to this Toolbox constitutes a first step in the journey of gathering appropriate state resources for particular components of a successful project. That journey can take several paths, however each of these paths will move toward a common goal. Your application through this "common portal" will be your project's first step toward accessing state resources. If designated as a Catalyst Grant, your priority project will immediately be linked with appropriate state resources that can potentially move the project to success. If not designated, your project will still be shepherded by connecting you directly with the state agency liaison responsible for following up on Cool City projects.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY? Generally, Local Units of Government, non-profit organizations, quasi-governmental entities and for-profits in partnership with local units or nonprofits, can apply (depending on the requirements of particular state programs.) In order to apply for the Pilot Program, the project must be conducted within a community that has an established Local Cool Cities Advisory Group (LCCAG). In addition, that community must either be a Core Community, Michigan Main Street Program community,

MEDC Blue Prints Program community and/or one of the 267 “invited” cities identified by the Governor and sent letters in September 2003. If your community qualifies as one of the types of communities listed above, and you are interested in creating an LCCAG, contact Karen Gagnon, Cool Cities Specialist at (517) 241-3203 or Kgagno@Michigan.gov for information. (NOTE: Lists of Core Communities, Participating Cities, and the 267 “invited” communities will be available on the MSHDA website at www.michigan.gov/mshda. Look under the “Spotlight” section for *Cool City Pilot Program*.)

WHAT WILL BE CONSIDERED WHEN THE APPLICATIONS ARE REVIEWED? Decisions will be made on the basis of the neighborhoods identified, specific project(s) submitted, the strength of partnerships, the level of public and private investment in the project, and the anticipated ability of that project to make a significant impact in the neighborhood. In addition, the feasibility and strength of the plan for implementation will be evaluated. The best of all projects submitted will be admitted into the Pilot Program.

1. **Neighborhoods.** We have learned that neighborhoods with the potential to not only retain current residents but attract newcomers, embody many of the characteristics listed below. (The term “neighborhood” applies to a defined and/or distinct area, which may include mixed-use environs such as downtowns.) In order to ascertain the potential for project success, you will be asked in the application to describe your project in regard to these characteristics:
 - Mixed-income housing opportunities
 - Pedestrian-friendly environment
 - Commercial/retail (basic goods and services, as well as entertainment venues)
 - Champion neighborhood/organizing mechanisms
 - Zoning and code enforcement support from local unit of government
 - Higher density
 - Clean/cared for public and private space
 - Food venue options (restaurants, grocery stores, etc.)
 - Historic districts (and/or building stock eligible for National Register listing)
 - Recreation opportunities/parks
 - Arts – galleries, shops, venues
 - Accessibility (including universal design for life-span inclusion)
2. **Project Partners:** Because creating vibrant, mixed use neighborhoods is a complex endeavor, multi-faceted, diverse partners are required for success. Projects that demonstrate a wide array of local partners will be favored.
3. **Project Leverage:** Projects must demonstrate in their applications the commitment of adequate public and private investment and support, including:
 - Evidence of private sector and foundation partners
 - Evidence that available state resources (e.g. Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, Department of History, Arts and Libraries, State Historic Preservation Office, etc.) have been incorporated into the project.
 - Linkage with any existing local economic/community development incentives (i.e. Renaissance Zone, Neighborhood Enterprise Zone, Obsolete Property Rehab Tax abatement, Community Development Block Grant funds, Community Foundation support, etc.)
3. **Projects.** Applications must demonstrate that the project is an important catalyst for creating or strengthening a vibrant, higher-density, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. The project should enhance the environment as a place where people will choose to **live**.
4. **Implementation.** Projects will demonstrate in their applications that there is a high likelihood that the

project will be implemented successfully.

- Projects must be feasible.
- Projects must be administered/developed by an entity with experience/capacity
- If designated a Cool City Catalyst Grant, the project must be ready to start by December 31, 2004 and provide evidence to that effect (e.g. letters from banks with specific project timeline, signed construction contract or development agreement, etc.)

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES? Refer to the Toolbox for specific activities tied to each program. These state resources have been carefully analyzed prior to their inclusion, for their applicability to creating vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods.

Eligible activities under the Cool City Catalyst grant may include (but are not limited to):

- physical infrastructure
- façade improvements
- streetscaping (including public art)
- land acquisition or other publicly owned or controlled uses
- rehabilitation or new construction of buildings (including theaters, mixed-use housing, galleries, etc.)
- demolition associated with construction (where viable historic resources are not damaged)
- greenspace/parks/pavilions
- Farmer's Markets
- Facilities for Outdoor Recreation

NOTE: Funds under the Cool City Catalyst Grant cannot be used for "soft" costs (studies, analyses, engineering) related to a project, or to fund festivals or other special events.

WANT TO LEARN MORE? Pre-bid workshops will be held in Marquette, Traverse City, Grand Rapids and Detroit. **Registration is NOT required.** At the workshops the applications will be made available, and the application process, etc. will be carefully outlined. As of April 1, 2004 applications will also be available in both MS Word and PDF formats on the MSHDA website www.michigan.gov/mshda (look under the "Spotlight" section for *Cool City Pilot Program*.)

April 5, 2004 1:00 – 3:00 PM RAMADA INN – Room: Pen West 412 W. WASHINGTON STREET MARQUETTE, MI 49855 906.228.6000 EXT 230 & 240	April 7, 2004 9:30 – 11:30 AM COBO CONFERENCE & EXH. CTR Room: M2-29 ONE WASHINGTON BLVD DETROIT, MI 48226 313.877.8777
April 6, 2004 1:00 – 3:00 PM WATERFRONT INN 2061 US 31 NORTH TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49686 231.938.1100 1.800.551.9283	April 8, 2004 9:30 – 11:30 AM CROWNE PLAZA Grand River Ball Room 5700 28 th STREET SE GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49546 616.957.1770

WHEN MUST MY APPLICATION AND ATTACHMENTS ARRIVE IN THE MSHDA OFFICE? By 5:00 PM, **May 7, 2004**. Send 10 copies of the application and attachments to Julie Hales-Smith, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, 735 East Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48912.

WHOM CAN I CONTACT FOR ASSISTANCE? Applicants with questions should email Julie Hales-Smith, Office of Community Development, MSHDA, at halesj@michigan.gov or call 517-373-6026.

HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE REVIEWED AND WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS? An interagency review committee will assist in the evaluation of applications. Projects with potential to create vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods will be forwarded through a pre-arranged network, to appropriate State Departments. If your project is selected to participate in the Pilot Program, you will be informed by May 24, 2004.